

Maryland-National Park And Planning Commission

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a bi-county agency established by the State in 1927 to prepare comprehensive land use and transportation plans as well as to acquire, develop, maintain, and operate a park system for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

The agency is guided by a ten-member commission, five of whom represent Montgomery County and constitute the membership of the Montgomery County Planning Board. In its role as the Park Commission, the Planning Board makes policy decisions on park activities in Montgomery County.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The FY09-14 CIP request consists of 7 new projects and 50 active, ongoing projects. The section following this narrative shows only the project description forms (PDFs) for which the Executive recommends changes to the M-NCPPC request. Those PDFs are followed by project briefs that provide a description of the change and the Executive's rationale. The complete set of PDFs submitted by the M-NCPPC can be found on its web site at http://mcparkandplanning.org/Parks/about/cip/fy09_14.shtm.

The mission of the M-NCPPC is to provide for the acquisition, conservation, development, maintenance, and management of a park system which, in harmony with the environment and in partnership with the community and other public agencies: protects, conserves, enhances, and interprets the County's natural and cultural resources; identifies and offers a variety of leisure opportunities; and is safe, accessible, and enjoyable for all. It is the Department's commitment to be receptive, progressive, equitable, and adaptive in observing and fulfilling this mission for current and future generations.

Montgomery County currently has over 33,602 acres of parkland and 404 different park and open space areas maintained by the M-NCPPC. Most of the park acreage is found in large Countywide parks that serve all County residents and form the framework of the park system. These include Regional, Recreational, Stream Valley, Conservation, and Special Parks. Montgomery County residents also enjoy the benefit of many Community Use Parks that are closer to home and can be used on a daily basis. These include Urban, Neighborhood, and Local Parks, and Neighborhood Conservation Areas. The CIP contains acquisition and development proposals for both Countywide and Community Use Parks.

For information purposes, an outline of the Park Classification System contained in the Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) for Montgomery County is provided at the end of this chapter.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Mary Ellen Venzke of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission at 301.495.2477 or Christopher Mullin of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2772 for more information regarding this department's capital budget.

CAPITAL PROGRAM REVIEW

M-NCPPC Request

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's FY09-14 capital program request totals \$208.0 million, or a 13.5 percent increase from the amended FY07-12 capital program of \$183.3 million. M-NCPPC's plan includes constructing new parks, renovating existing parks, and maintaining and improving physical infrastructure.

Executive Recommendations

The Executive recommends a total six-year CIP of \$192.9 million, which represents an increase of \$9.611 million or nearly 5.2 percent compared to the amended FY07-12 capital program. The Executive recommends \$79.7 million, or 100.0 percent of M-NCPPC's request for Acquisition and \$113.2 or 88.2 percent of M-NCPPC's request for Development.

As noted in the Executive Recommendation pages following the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission PDFs at the end of this chapter, the Executive proposes that some projects be funded with funding sources that are different from M-NCPPC's request.

Highlights

- Support an increase to minor renovations local parks, an infrastructure maintenance project
- Continue to fund Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement projects to upgrade park infrastructure
- Add three new local parks, Darnestown Square Heritage Park, Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park, and Falls Road Local Park
- Add two new projects – Rock Creek Sewer Improvements and Lake Needwood Dam Modifications – as a part of infrastructure maintenance upgrades
- Add the Woodlawn Barn Visitors Center project

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

The County Executive generally supports the program proposed by M-NCPPC, within the constraints of fund availability. The Executive is pleased to support the following new parks and park expansion requests which will provide additional and improved facilities in the County: Darnestown Square Heritage Park, Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park, Falls Road Local Park, and Woodlawn Barn Visitors Center.

The Executive recommends the following new projects to address Park infrastructure upgrades: Lake Needwood Modifications and Rock Creek Sewer Improvements.

The Executive recommends funding increases to infrastructure projects, including Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement: Local Parks and Minor New Construction: Non Local-Parks.

The Executive does not recommend funding Magruder Branch Trail at this time due to fiscal capacity. He also does not recommend the North Four Corners Local Park due to significant community concerns that have not been fully addressed.

PROGRAM FUNDING

M-NCPPC finances its six-year CIP using resources from five primary funding sources. They are General Obligation (G.O.) and Park and Planning bonds, Current Revenues, State Funds, and Other Funds.

G. O. Bonds and Park and Planning Bonds

Primary local funding for park acquisition and development comes from two sources: Park and Planning bonds and County general obligation (G.O.) bonds. Park and Planning bonds fund local parks, while County G.O. bonds fund larger, regional parks, more likely to serve residents from all over the County. (See *Parks Classification System*, below.) Additional funding is received from State Program Open Space (POS) funds for park acquisition and development.

The Executive recommends \$75.6 million in general obligation bond-funded expenditures, an increase of \$8.5 million from the FY07-12 Amended CIP.

The Executive supports a total of \$23.6 million in Park and Planning bonds, \$2.1 million more than the \$21.5 million in the FY07-12 Amended CIP.

Current Revenues

Park and Planning current revenues support local parkland and facility improvements which are not eligible for debt financing, for example, for planning or when the useful life of equipment does not equal or exceed the term of the bonds.

Non-local parkland and facilities are financed with County current revenues which are applied for project planning or to

selected improvements of short useful life, while long-term improvements, including land acquisition, are funded with County general obligation bonds. This relationship between the County and the M-NCPPC concerning the funding, acquisition, and development responsibilities for non-local parks is defined in a 1972 agreement between the two agencies. Under this agreement, non-local parks responsibilities include the acquisition and development of regional, special, and stream valley parks.

The Executive recommends a total of \$17.7 million in combined County current revenues and Park and Planning current revenues, a decrease of \$5.6 million from the FY07-12 Amended CIP.

Enterprise Funds

Revenue to fund the Parks CIP also comes from the operations of M-NCPPC's self-supporting Enterprise Fund facilities. Enterprise Funds support golf courses, tennis courts, skating rinks and other facilities that generate revenue, such as train rides and carousels. The request for FY09-14 Enterprise Funding is \$0.6 million which is equal to the current approved level. The Executive recommends Enterprise Funding at \$0.6 million.

State Funds

State funds include State Program Open Space (POS) funds and other State aid. POS funds are for acquisition of parkland and development of new parks. POS funds can be used to cover 100 percent of acquisition costs, up to an amount set by the State. Further, a 75 percent State and 25 percent County match provides for the development of new parks or additional acquisition. This allows the County to leverage local funds.

The County Executive is recommending POS funding at the level of \$53.9 million.

Other sources of State funding that the County Executive is recommending are: POS Stateside funding at the level of \$6.0 million; State ICC Funding (M-NCPPC only) at the level \$2.0 million; and State Aid at the level of \$0.2 million.

Other Funds

The Executive is recommending \$13.4 million of expenditures with funding from six other sources: contributions, Revolving (P&P only), Park and Planning ALA Bonds, Federal TEA-21 funds, Federal Aid, and Land Sale (P&P only).

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Countywide Parks serve all residents of Montgomery County and include:

Regional Parks: Parks of 200+ acres that generally contain a stream valley, picnic/playground areas, and interpretive or other natural areas, but which also provide a wide range of recreational opportunities such as: trails, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf courses, and campgrounds.

Recreational Parks: Parks larger than 50 acres in size which are more intensively developed than Regional Parks and may contain athletic fields, tennis and multi-use courts, picnic/playground areas, a golf course, water-oriented recreation areas, trails, and natural areas.

Special Parks: Parks which include areas with unique features of historic and cultural significance. Varying in type, they may include agricultural centers, gardens, small conference centers, or historic sites.

Stream Valley Parks: Interconnected parks along major stream valleys providing picnic and playground areas, hiker-biker and bridle trails, athletic fields, and conservation and recreation areas.

Conservation Parks: Large parks that place primary emphasis on preservation of areas of significant natural value and provide opportunities for compatible passive recreation activities.

Community-Use Parks serve residents of surrounding communities and include:

Urban Parks: Very small parks, serving highly urban areas with landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, tennis courts, and shelters.

Neighborhood Parks: Small parks, providing informal recreation in residential areas with play equipment, play fields, sitting areas, shelters, and tennis courts.

Local Parks: Parks that provide athletic fields and programmed and general recreation facilities such as play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic areas, shelters, and other recreational facilities.

Neighborhood Conservation Areas: Small parcels of conservation-oriented parkland in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.

In addition to the parks operated by the M-NCPPC, there are more than 15,000 acres of Federal and State parkland and some local parks maintained by municipalities in Montgomery County.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP), operating budget, and capital budget for the M-NCPPC are coordinated with the fiscal and capital program requirements of the Montgomery County Charter. The M-NCPPC is required to submit a CIP program to the County Executive and County Council by November 1 of each odd-numbered year. This CIP is reviewed by the County Executive and is included, with the Executive's recommendations, in the recommended CIP that is submitted to the County Council by January 15. After public hearings, the

Council reviews and approves the proposed capital program with such modifications as it deems appropriate. The approved program becomes final upon 30 days written notice to the Commission.

In connection with the approval of the M-NCPPC operating budget, the County Council also approves a capital budget which reflects approved expenditures for the first year of the approved CIP. The M-NCPPC may not undertake any project which is not contained in the first year of the approved CIP. The M-NCPPC's capital budget and CIP are conceptually distinct. The six-year CIP contains the proposed construction and funding schedules for previously approved and newly proposed projects and is subject to County Council modifications. The capital budget provides the appropriations necessary to implement the construction schedule.